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## THAT RIGHTEOUS MAN.

### A MEDITATION.

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It can but strike us as strange that Lot, for whose character, as revealed to us in the book of Genesis, we have never had much admiration, should turn up in 2 Peter as a sort of typical Old Testament saint. Two thousand years is a long time to wait for recognition and appreciation—longer, surely, than we should care to wait; and, we may remark in passing, it can but be regarded as unfortunate, looking at it from “that righteous man’s” point of view, that this commendation should have found expression only in 2 Peter, almost the only apostolic letter whose authenticity has been persistently and widely denied.

Was Peter’s statement, premising for convenience that the statement is Peter’s, based on the meager outline of Lot’s life given in Genesis? We cannot say positively. There may have been extra-biblical authority of a questionable nature that seemed to furnish plausible ground for the phrase, as there was for not a few historic statements found in our New Testament. Rich as is the Old Testament in historical matter, there was no valid reason why Jesus and his apostles should fail to avail themselves of other sources, both oral and written. If some of this extra-biblical material used will hardly bear the light of the historico-critical spirit now so vigilant, we must remember that the makers of our New Testament used such material largely for purposes of illustration, as we refer to traditions concerning Washington or Franklin, with little regard to the critical value of the material used if only it illustrates some truth or principle we wish to inculcate.

Lot, Peter tells us, that righteous man, vexed his righteous soul day by day. The fact that the verb is in the active rather

than in the passive voice is worthy of note. The statement is not that the wickedness of Sodom distressed him merely. The expression, whether or not the facts warranted it, is stronger. We are told that he vexed his righteous soul over the wickedness of that wicked city, *i. e.*, that he made himself uncomfortable, if not miserable, by contemplating its want, wretchedness, and sin. He could not be indifferent to what he saw and heard. He was too good a man for that. Because he was righteous his soul was troubled. His goodness was conceived to have been of the quiet sort. It was lethargic. He was just good enough to be disturbed and made to worry over the iniquity he had to face, but not enough aroused to be led to throw himself into a reasonable, to say nothing of a violent, crusade against it. As a moral force he was woefully deficient; he had not his uncle's sublime faith and his active, energetic godliness. If Sodom had need to open her gates after that strife among the hills between the herdsmen of Lot's cattle and the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle, she did well, as regards her own tranquility, to open them to this man whose personal piety could hardly have caused a ripple upon that iniquitous sea of human depravity. Lot must ever stand before us as typical of that large class of men who are wanting in moral forcefulness.

This is not a sermon. It can scarce be called a meditation even. It therefore leaves the words of 2 Peter to be used as the readers of this paper may elect.